

## **Statement on the Appointment of Karen Smith as the New UN Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect**

On 20 December 2018, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced the appointment of Ms. Karen Smith as his new Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP). Ms. Smith succeeds Mr. Ivan Šimonović of Croatia.

Ms. Smith is a lecturer of International Relations at Leiden University, The Netherlands. Prior to her current position, Ms. Smith taught International Relations at the University of Cape Town, as well as at the Universities of Stellenbosch and Western Cape, earning her PhD at the former. Her research has focused on non-western contributions to international relations theory, in addition to human rights and global governance.

As UN Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on RtoP, Ms. Smith will be responsible for the overall development of RtoP within the UN system, as well as for supporting the General Assembly in its continued consideration of the norm. In order to fulfill her mandate, the Special Adviser on RtoP will need to work closely with UN actors, Member States, regional and sub-regional organizations, and civil society in order to holistically implement and better mainstream the norm, including through the conceptualization of the UN Secretary-General's annual reports on RtoP and discourse around the upcoming formal debate on RtoP within the General Assembly this year.

The ICRtoP looks forward to working with Ms. Smith in her new capacity, as well as continuing to work closely with Mr. Adama Dieng, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, and the entire UN Office on the Prevention of Genocide and RtoP, to continue advocating for early and collective action in order to better prevent and respond to the threat of mass atrocity crimes. In this regard, the ICRtoP will continue its work with the UN Office to strengthen the relationship between civil society and the UN system in order to increase collaboration and cooperation on the Responsibility to Protect and better protect vulnerable populations around the world from these heinous crimes.

Read more about the [mandate](#) of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect and the [work](#) of the Joint Office. For more information, see the ICRtoP's [page](#) on the Joint Office.